**Teaching Vocabulary: What You Need to Know**

* Repeated exposures are essential to learning new words (Folse, 2004, 2008).
* Even if you do nothing else with vocabulary in your class, make a list of essential words or terms that students should know for your course and present them to all students as part of the material for the course. Hold students accountable for these words on quizzes and tests (Folse, 2004). The highest priority for instruction should be given to words that are both important in understanding course texts and likely to be useful in students’ own writing (Grabe & Stoller, 2018, p. 35).
* Encourage students to keep a vocabulary notebook with new words from the course (this notebook could also include lexical bundles and other phrases as opposed to just single words). The layout should be regular and each entry should include more than just the definition or translation of the word. Synonyms, common collocations, and examples of usage are particularly important (Folse, 2008).
* Students may think that “knowing” a word means being able to define it; however, truly knowing a word means: knowing all the meanings of a word, knowing the word’s connotation, knowing how to spell and pronounce the word, knowing the word’s part of speech, knowing how to use the word, and knowing common collocations of the word (Folse, 2004, pp. 10-16).
* First-Year Seminars and writing-intensive courses are good courses in which to teach paraphrasing. According to vocabulary expert Ken Folse (2008), “What we call plagiarism may more often be a result of lexical limitations, even lexical ignorance and desperation, than cultural differences or outright cheating” (p. 3).
* Lexical limitations can interfere with meaning in a student’s writing as much or more than grammar and can result in simplistic and/or formulaic writing (Folse, 2008, p. 3-4).
* Second language writing scholar Dana Ferris (2011) writes, “Research suggests that if even three percent of the vocabulary in a text is unfamiliar, the text can be difficult to the point of frustration for readers” (p. 162).
* Tools such as [Compleat Lexical Tutor](https://www.lextutor.ca/) (Cobb), [COCA](https://www.english-corpora.org/coca/) (Davies, 1990-present), as well as readability websites, can be helpful in selecting vocabulary for instruction and in assessing the difficulty of a reading

**References**

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